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S E C R E T OTTAWA 001569

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [ETTC](#) [MCAP](#) [IN](#) [CA](#)
SUBJECT: CANADA SEEKS INFORMATION ON INDIAN SEA SPARROW SALE

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) This is an action request -- see para 6.

12. (S/NF) Summary: Canada requests releasable intelligence assessments and policy analysis by U.S. agencies on the proposed sale of Sea Sparrow missiles by the U.S. to India. Canadian naval forces rely exclusively on this missile, and are seeking assurances that a proposed sale to India would not increase the vulnerability of their vessels. Canada's preliminary assessment is that the risk is low, but Canadian interlocutors would appreciate the benefit of U.S. analysis. End summary.

13. (S/NF) Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Deputy Director for Defense and Security Relations Anne Burgess requested Embassy assistance in obtaining information and analysis on the strategic and tactical implications for Canada from a proposed sale of Sea Sparrow ship-to-ship missiles to India by the U.S. Burgess emphasized that Canada is an original member of the consortium that developed the system, and that Canadian naval forces rely solely on the Sea Sparrow for their mission needs. Burgess explained that Canada's understanding is that all members of the Sea Sparrow consortium must approve any transfers or sales to non-consortium members. Given Canada's dependence on this missile, Department of National Defence (DND) officials have expressed concern about the proposed sale and are separately seeking information directly from DOD through the Canadian defense attache office in Washington.

14. (S/NF) Burgess added that DFAIT and DND do not see any true & show stoppers⁸ from the Canadian perspective that would cause Canada ultimately to try to block the sale. She noted that she understands other consortium members, notably Australia, are also seeking information from the U.S. on the likelihood of increased vulnerabilities to their naval forces.

15. (S/NF) Burgess also requested any assessments, such as by State INR or DIA, releasable to Canada in particular on the possibility of leakage of this technology to the Russians, given that India uses Russian ships and works closely with the Russian navy. DFAIT analysts have already concluded that the potential transfer of the missiles would not give India a new capability, alleviating some Canadian concerns about changing the regional power balance through the sale. Canada is now solely concerned with the likelihood of increasing the vulnerability of Canadian forces. Burgess reiterated that Canada is not trying to & raise alarms⁸ in Washington with this request, and is primarily seeking confirmation of its own preliminary assessment that the risk to Canada is low.

16. (S/NF) Action request: please provide any releasable intelligence assessments and/or policy analysis on the contemplated missile sale to share with DFAIT interlocutors. Additionally -- and perhaps more importantly -- please confirm whether the U.S. shares the Canadian view that all members of the original consortium must approve any transfers or sales of the Sea Sparrow to non-members, or whether we

should disabuse DFAIT of this belief.

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